

# **AGENDA**

## **JOINT WORK SESSION CITY OF ASPEN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSIONS & PITKIN COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**Rio Grande  
Aspen, Colorado**

**August 26, 2010**

### **8:30AM WORKSESSION**

1. Review of the Aspen Area Community Plan update
  - a. Review of overall document – Summary and Common Themes
  - b. Review of overall document – the Urban Growth Boundary

### **Noon ADJOURN WORKSESSION**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City of Aspen Planning and Zoning Commission  
Pitkin County Planning and Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Jessica Garrow, City Long Range Planner  
Ellen Sassano, County Long Range Planner

**DATE OF MEMO:** August 25, 2010

**MEETING DATE:** August 26, 2010, Rio Grande, 8:30am - Noon

**RE:** Summary, Common Themes, the UGB

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**SUMMARY:** Staff has prepared a draft Introduction for the AACP. This outlines the common themes that are in the plan. Staff proposes working on this document at the meeting, and if we do not complete work on it, to continue the work next week after the Housing Chapter has been reviewed. Attached as Exhibit A is a longer introduction, and attached as Exhibit B is a shorter introduction.

If there is time at the meeting, staff would like to review the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) with the group and highlight some proposed changes to the boundary. Staff would also like to hear if the group if wants to include a statement in the plan regarding development outside the UGB. Currently the plan is silent on this issue, and staff believes a statement regarding the location of growth should be included either in the introduction, Managing Growth chapter, or both.

**SCHEDULE:** The following is the schedule for P&Zs remaining meetings on the AACP:

Thursday Aug 26, 8:30am – noon in Rio Grande: Review of Intro/Summary. Review of the UGB.

Tuesday, Aug 31, 4:30 – 7:30 in Sister Cities: Review Housing Chapter with Housing Frontiers Group and Housing Board.

Thursday, Sept 2, 8:30am – noon in Council Chambers: Complete review of draft plan.

Thursday, Sept 9, 8:30am – noon in Council Chambers: Complete review of draft plan.

Attachments:

Exhibit A: Draft Introduction – long  
Exhibit B: Draft Introduction - short  
Exhibit C: Map of proposed changes to the UGB

## Introduction

The purpose of the Aspen Area Community Plan is to serve as a guide for the future. It outlines our vision and philosophy for our future, and provides an action plan to implement our shared vision. The plan considers the balance between the physical environment and the social well-being of the Aspen Area.

Updating the Aspen Area Community Plan began in 2008 with gathering and disseminating all kinds of information on what has changed in our community since 2000. We then shifted into a public feedback phase, using focus groups and a survey and instant voting “clicker sessions.” More than 1,000 community members provided feedback and direction for this plan.

Considering all the facts and extensive public feedback, the City and County Planning and Zoning Commissions have jointly drafted a plan that charts a course for the next 10 years. If there is a common theme, it is re-focusing on the elements of the Aspen Area that have attracted people here since the birth of the modern resort in the late 1940s.

### **Common Themes**

The scenic views of rocky mountains, a quiet bicycle ride along a shady river corridor, the unparalleled experience of skiing, the feeling of a small town and the genuine sense of history conveyed by our built environment. These are among the many reasons why Aspen has attracted people through the years, and compelled many to make it their home.

This plan identifies the elements of the Aspen area that made it unique in the past, and must be maintained in the future. This plan identifies the resort economy as the only sustainable economy, and identifies a range of methods to maintain, protect and enhance it. The plan is divided into nine chapters, with common themes that link each chapter together.

### Re-focusing Growth

We recognize that the development economy must be managed so that it does no harm to the important features that make the Aspen area a compelling place to live, work and visit. The plan calls for a built environment that reflects our community character and preserves our quality of life. Under current zoning, between 1.7 and 3.9 million new square feet of single family and residential development is possible. We believe this level of development would result in significant resource consumption, increased traffic and congestion impacts, and would not be consistent with our small town character.

The plan proposes to pace the rate of all development to avoid the most intense periods of disruptive construction activity. It would preserve the remaining views of the mountains and the relaxing experience of rivers and creeks by calling for new limits on development on hillsides and in riparian areas. In addition, the plan calls for reductions in house size throughout the Aspen Area to help preserve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

## Exhibit A – Introduction, long version

For 15 years, we have lost dozens of moderate and economy lodges, and watched the lodging inventory tilt towards large rooms and luxury amenities. We want to re-balance our lodging inventory to enable a wide variety of visitors to enjoy the Aspen area – and to assure that special events remain a key to our seasonal tourism economy. We want to encourage smaller room sizes in new lodges, and preserve existing lodging rather than watch them continually convert to other uses.

### Outdoor Resources

We are focused on opportunities to continually improve our system of trails both for recreation and commuting; to provide parks and fields for active recreation; and open space to preserve scenic views and maintain wildlife habitat.

### Environmental Sustainability

Dedicating ourselves to preserving the natural environment also means breathing clean air on a summer night, listening to the burbling of a creek and having a clear view of the stars @ 8,000 feet. This plan includes a new chapter that focuses solely on Environmental Quality, setting new and ambitious goals that could make Aspen a leader in preserving natural resources. For the first time, we are clear in our commitment to reducing consumption, limiting our carbon footprint, and taking responsibility for how our actions impact the world around us.

### Reinvigorating the Aspen Idea

The wide array of music and theatre, filmfests and dance, lectures and debates that draw internationally known figures fill our calendars with a range of options for engagement and education. If sustainable tourism is to be fostered and cultivated, we must rediscover and reinvigorate the Aspen Idea as a unique part of our heritage and identity. A new chapter in the Aspen Area Community Plan focuses on “Sustaining the Aspen Idea,” including accessibility to high quality educational experiences, arts and cultural events – and new ways of presenting Aspen to the outside world.

If we are to tell Aspen’s compelling story to future generations, the best examples of the architecture that sprung up around the Aspen Idea and the birth of the modern resort must be preserved. This plan incorporates the results of a recent two-year public process that addressed why and how Post-WWII architecture can be preserved, to reflect the people and cultural trends of that defining era.

### Community Workforce Housing

In addition to the natural setting, opportunities for recreation, cultural events and a built environment that conveys a genuine sense of history – we have also managed to maintain a strong and viable year-round community. It has taken years of dedicated work and debate to provide affordable homes for a year-round community where local schools and young families are centers of social activity, where people volunteer to clear trails and serve on boards, and play on softball and curling teams after work. But we have to expect the continued disappearance of locally-owned free market homes, so we must maintain an effective affordable housing program. This plan includes a focus on designing housing

## Exhibit A – Introduction, long version

where livability is critically important, and new projects blend into existing neighborhoods.

We also believe new development must offset the jobs it creates by providing affordable housing.

### Caring for our Community

The opportunity to live and work in the Aspen area is just one element of a strong and sustainable year-round community. For the first time, the Aspen Area Community Plan includes a chapter focusing on the range of services that are part of becoming a “Lifelong Aspenite.” From day care to education, from public safety to senior services, this chapter invites collaboration between a wide range of government agencies, non-profits and other organizations that can foster a healthy and thriving year-round community.

### Transportation

The public feedback phase of the community plan process identified transportation as one of the most serious problems facing the Aspen Area. This plan places our transportation system in the context of maintaining a quality of life that reflects how a small town should look, feel and function.

If we are to preserve what attracts people to Aspen, we must continue to limit vehicle-trips while providing better opportunities for people to use alternative modes of transportation throughout the region, such as public transit, biking and walking. We must continue to explore a range of Transportation Demand Management concepts before considering substantial physical changes to the Entrance to Aspen. If and when physical changes become the last resort, we must use the latest animation technologies to explain options, and filter them through a set of community objectives.

### Sub-Area Planning

Finally, this plan recognizes that a master plan for the West of Castle Creek Corridor is vital if we are to ensure future development in the area is consistent with the existing transitional nature of the area.

The West of Castle Creek Corridor is the gateway to Aspen, and home to a variety of uses that are important to the community – including the airport, a local business center, a community college, a ski area, affordable housing and golf courses. The visual experience of the gateway is a series of “nodes” of activity that are separated by undeveloped spaces. This plan prescribes a limited set of uses for each node while maintaining undeveloped spaces between them. In this way, we can preserve the varied visual experience of the corridor, and avoid transforming it into a constant tunnel of repetitive development that is found outside so many towns.

We also recognize that comprehensive Master Planning is needed in the Maroon and Castle Creek Corridors. This planning should occur immediately following the adoption of this plan.

### **Going Forward**

The Aspen Area has a long history of planning for our future – from the first growth management codes in the 1970s to the first Aspen Area Community Plan in 1993. This update continues our tradition of comprehensive community planning.

While we don't have all the answers, this plan is our best attempt to address the many challenges our community faces. We know more will need to be done, but that planning for our future is a process that evolves over time. This plan represents the next step in that process.

[as a call-out box in this section] This plan is:

- Comprehensive in that it applies to all property and all issues within the UGB.
- General in that it cannot address every issue, problem, or challenge that will arise in the next ten years, but the plan should be used as a guide for all policy discussions.
- Action-oriented by outlining specific steps that should be taken to address the issues, problems, and challenges we know the community currently faces and is likely to encounter in the future.
- Long-range in focus in that it is written for a 10 year time frame and anticipates future opportunities and challenges.

## Exhibit B

### Introduction to the Aspen Area Community Plan – Short version

The purpose of the Aspen Area Community Plan is to serve as a guide for the future. It outlines our vision and philosophy for our future, and provides an action plan to implement our shared vision. The plan considers the balance between the physical environment and the social well-being of the Aspen Area.

Updating the Aspen Area Community Plan began in 2008 with gathering and disseminating all kinds of information on what has changed in our community since 2000. We then shifted into a public feedback phase, using focus groups and a survey and instant voting “clicker sessions.” More than 1,000 community members provided feedback and direction for this plan.

Considering all the facts and extensive public feedback, the City and County Planning and Zoning Commissions have jointly drafted a plan that charts a course for the next 10 years. If there is a common theme, it is re-focusing on the elements of the Aspen Area that have attracted people here since the birth of the modern resort in the late 1940s.

This plan identifies the elements of the Aspen area that made it unique in the past, and must be maintained in the future. Perhaps most importantly, the plan identifies the resort economy as the only sustainable economy, and identifies a range of methods to maintain, protect and enhance it. The following is the top 10 list for general direction and focus for the community over the next 10 years:

- 1) We want to look at the buildout potential under our existing zoning and “Zone it Like we mean it” relative to intensity (size and scale of commercial, lodge and residential uses) and location (what is appropriate in the core of town vs. the entrance to the community). There is --- amount of potential additional development and we need to analyze if that will fit within the community or if we need to re-focus on redevelopment. We have to “walk our talk “concerning the excessive use of our natural resources.
- 2) We want to pace all development to ensure a sustainable community that does not boom and bust and is actually livable during the construction season.
- 3) We want to encourage a variety of lodge accommodations in order to attract a variety of visitors.
- 4) We want to continue to enhance safe, attractive and interesting pedestrian, bike, and nordic connections in and around the Aspen Area in order to encourage people to use the trail system rather than drive cars.
- 5) We want to ensure nature is part of our community rather than simply somewhere to get away to. This includes maintaining views, improving our water and air quality and preserving wildlife habitat.
- 6) We want to rediscover and reinvigorate the Aspen Idea as a unique part of our heritage and identity. This means increasing accessibility to high quality educational experiences, arts and

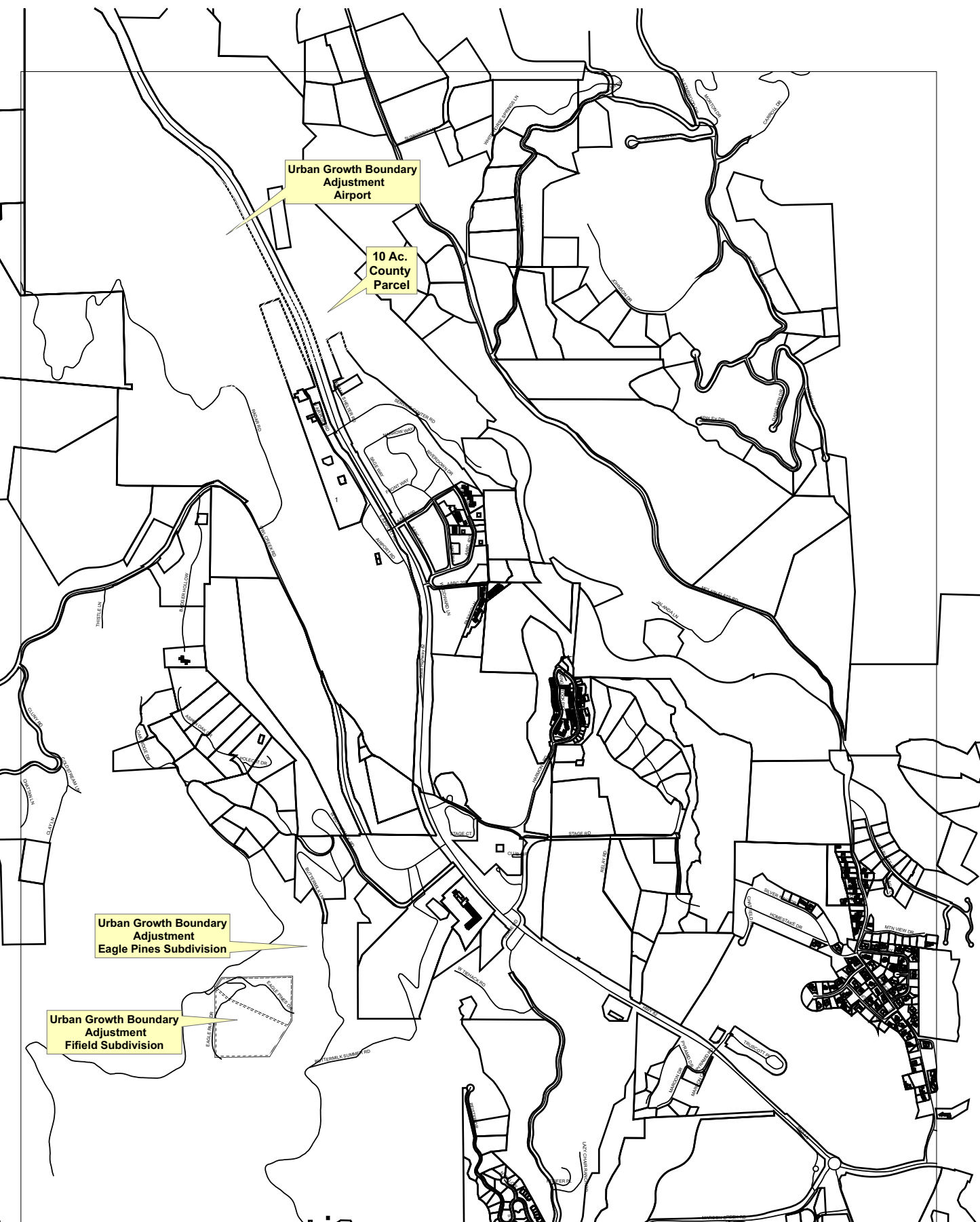
Intro, short version

## Exhibit B

cultural events, and preserving the best examples of the architecture that sprung up around the Aspen Idea and the birth of the modern resort in order to tell Aspen's compelling story to future generations.

- 7) We want to ensure that the community stays intact from the inside out. That means providing affordable housing opportunities so that those who work here can make Aspen their home and be a community in which to invest their lives.
- 8) We want to support community members throughout all phases of life from young to old.
- 9) We want people to use cars less and have options for getting to and around the Aspen area.
- 10) We recognize that several places within the Urban Growth Boundary need specific land use plans that should be created ASAP. These include the Highway Corridor West of Castle Creek and the Maroon and Castle Creek area.

This plan identifies proposed recommendations (or action items) on how to begin to achieve these top 10 goals and more.



Urban Growth Boundary Adjustment Airport

10 Ac. County Parcel

Urban Growth Boundary Adjustment Eagle Pines Subdivision

Urban Growth Boundary Adjustment Fifeild Subdivision